

EPA Brownfields Supplemental Assistance

Lowell, MA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

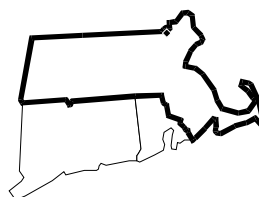
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA awarded the City of Lowell supplemental assistance for its Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot and additional funding for assessments at brownfields properties to be used for greenspace purposes. There is very little undeveloped land remaining in Lowell, making redevelopment of abandoned industrial sites necessary to stimulate economic revitalization in the community. Lowell is ethnically diverse, with a 23 percent minority population, and economically depressed, with an 18 percent poverty rate and an unemployment rate that increased 50 percent from 1988 to 1996. Lowell has been designated a federal Enterprise Community (EC). Many of the city's brownfields are located near low-income residential neighborhoods. The city has had some success in redeveloping brownfields, but suspected contamination at many sites has made it difficult to attract developers.

This Pilot will focus its efforts on two project areas: the Acre Urban Revitalization Area (Acre) and the Jackson-Appletron-Middlesex Urban Revitalization area (JAM). The Acre is blighted with incompatible mixed land uses, obsolete street patterns, dangerous traffic intersections, vacant and underutilized structures, old dilapidated structures, high crime, and

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Lowell, Massachusetts

Date of Announcement:
March 2000

Amount: \$150,000
Greenspace: \$50,000

Profile: The pilot will target two areas for urban revitalization and greenspace projects.

Contacts:

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Visit the EPA Region 1 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/remed/brnflid/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

economic decay. JAM includes some of Lowell's most outstanding examples of mill architecture and a wide range of nineteenth century Victorian commercial, institutional, and residential architecture; however, it still contains an abundant number of vacant buildings and lots, poor transportation patterns, and blight. The city is seeking to designate both areas as Urban Renewal Projects and obtain 50 percent of the project costs from the state. An integral component to this urban redevelopment is evaluating the contamination and designing cleanup options for these brownfields properties.

- Conduct community outreach and education activities, such as fact sheets, meetings, site visits, and interim reports;
- Evaluate the extent of contamination and develop cleanup options for one to two selected sites in the target areas; and
- Conduct environmental assessments and cleanup planning/design activities at Centennial Island and the two selected greenspace sites.

OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The Pilot will use the supplemental assistance at the Acre and JAM sites to conduct site assessments and cleanup planning activities. Sites will be prioritized based on consistency with CERCLA requirements, the economic redevelopment potential, public interest, the schedule for redevelopment, and ownership status. Parcels under city ownership will receive a higher priority. Further, the Brownfields Project Manager will continue to foster existing partnerships with important stakeholders by working collaboratively with and providing outreach to these partners, community members, and residents.

The Pilot will use greenspace funding to target opportunities for small-scale greenspace creation, such as trail ways and walkways along the many canals that run through the JAM and Acre areas. In addition, the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust has already identified a site along the Concord River—known as Centennial Island—that would not only continue plans to link the entire corridor but would provide a setting for a truly unique community park.

To accomplish these objectives, the Pilot plans to:

- Compile an inventory and prioritize sites within the Acre and JAM target areas;
- Conduct Phase I site assessments on approximately eight sites, Phase II site assessment on approximately three sites, and Phase II assessments on one to two sites;